

## THE OLD FIREPLACE.

'Twas built in the days so long ago,  
 This fireplace tall and wide,  
 And no one now can ever know  
 Who, in the winter-tide  
 Sat by the warm ingle  
 And heard the wind mingle  
 With snow and sleet outside.  
 Upon the stones now black with time  
 Stretches the golden glow,  
 The shining flames that readily climb  
 Their jagged shadows throw,  
 The log's drowsy humming  
 In monotone coming  
 Sounds weirdly soft and low.  
 Along the vistas of the past,  
 Faint visions seemed to stray,  
 The print of many feet is cast  
 Upon the hearthstone gray.  
 In dark crannies keeping  
 Dim secrets lie sleeping,  
 There watch the stones always.  
 The dreams that come within its light  
 The fire lit silence fill,  
 While shadows flit from out the night  
 And steal o'er time's doorsill,  
 Through memory's paths weary  
 Come thought-phantoms eerie  
 Around us wan and still.  
 Amid the night there falls a spell  
 Weaved where the firelight plays,  
 For fancies past and future dwell  
 Where shines the ruddy blaze;  
 Aloof, in our dreaming,  
 Air-castles are gleaming,  
 Alight with lambent rays.  
 And when the long cold nights begin,  
 Near to the fireplace wide,  
 We sit, when eve'n light creeps in,  
 Its cozy hearth beside,  
 Close by the bright ingle  
 And hear the wind mingle  
 With sleet and snow outside.

## IN MY NEST.

"I shall die in my nest," was the comfortable assurance of the patriarch of Uz. It has been the confidence of many another, "I shall die in my nest."

There are many people who are busying themselves making their nests. Carefully built, well lined, snug and comfortable; surely the prospect of dying in such a nest is not to be despised, and so, many men devote their energies to the work of preparing a permanent nest. They build houses, they lay up wealth, they make everything convenient for their comfort, and then they hope to spend their days surrounded by all the blessings which they have accumulated. The business man says, I shall die in my nest; the student says, I shall die in my nest; the minister of the gospel secures a position and settles himself for life; he expects to die in his own nest. No matter if the world is perishing for lack of knowledge; no matter if Christ says, "Go ye into all

the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" he decides not to go, and says, "I shall die in my nest."

"The patriarch of Uz, who thought to die in his nest, found himself greatly mistaken. It was not long before the nest was torn and scattered, and he, bereft of wealth, and friends, and kindred, was sitting in the dust and was scraping himself with a potsherd.

It is easy for God to rout any man from his nest; it is easy for him to put a thorn in the nest, and make men glad to get out of it. It is easy for Him to make men hasten away from scenes where they fondly supposed they were securely established, and flee as for their lives from nests which they supposed were to be their permanent abode. Many a man has planned for permanence only to find his purposes broken off, his plans a failure, and he a waif tossed on stormy waters, driven by rude winds, and finding no rest.

The only permanent resting place is in that God who has been "our home in all generations." The only nest where we can safely repose is where he covers us with his pinions, and hides us beneath the shadow of his wing; and to that rest we are invited by him who ever loves and cares for the suffering sons and daughters of Adam. "How often would I have gathered" you, "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

"He who hath made his refuge God,  
 Shall find a most secure abode;  
 Shall walk all day in cooling shade,  
 And there at night shall rest his head."

—The Christian.

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts."

The greatest miracle that I know of is that of my conversion. I was dead and I live; I was blind and I see; I was a slave and I am free; I was an enemy of God and I love Him. Prayer, the Bible, the society of Christians—these were to me a source of profound *ennui*; whilst now it is the pleasures of the world that are a weariness to me, and piety is the source of all my joy. Behold the miracle! And if God has been able to work that one, there are none of which he is not capable.—Vinet.

## A SURPRISE PARTY.

BY LAVINIA S. GOODWIN.

Rosa Morris is ten years old. The family counts two boys older and three girls younger. One and two and three are six.

But Mamma Morris says she isn't at all like the old woman who lived in a shoe; she had not so many children she doesn't know what to do.

And Papa Morris says if their small house seems full at night, when they are all gathered in, it is the more like a nest of birds.

Then the brood warble a gay chorus, "Birds in their little nests agree."

Rosa, who commonly helps care for and amuse the others, had been ill in bed for a few days. How much she was missed, indoors and out doors, cannot be told.

"What shall we do?" they kept saying to one another. "O dear, seems as though we was most all sick abed, or gone away!"

"Who will sew our kite for us?" sadly asked the boys. Mamie whined, "Somebody put on me a clean apron." Little Lucy moaned, "We's so mis'-able!"

At last Flora, who is eight years old, said: "I think it is our turn to do a little for poor Rosa, now that we begin to see how much she always has done for us. I am going to get some goldenrod to make her room bright and pretty."

The pleased little sisters cried, "We too!"

"I know where the blackberries are ripe," said Edgar Morris. "I'll pick a cupful for Rosa."

Roy Morris added, "I'll bring her some of the great red apples from the tree on the hill."

I assure you it was quite a surprise when the sisters and brothers, from the least to the greatest, filed into the bedroom where Rosa lay propped up by pillows, and gave their gifts.

"How very good you all are!" exclaimed the little invalid, taking the flowers and fruit. The color came to her cheek, the light to her eyes, and she continued, "This makes me feel almost well. To-morrow I am going to be dressed."—Our Little Ones.